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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002541

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TAGS: [IN](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [KWRF](#)
SUBJECT: INDIAN HOME MINISTRY SECRETARY GUPTA RECEPTIVE TO
OFFER OF COUNTERTERRORISM ASSISTANCE AND TO U.S. CONCERNS
ABOUT RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

REF: A) NEW DELHI 2498 B) NEW DELHI 2513 C) CHENNAI 315

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Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador met with Home Ministry Secretary Madhukar Gupta on September 19 to give condolences for the September 13 terrorist attacks, offer the GOI a look into the USG's model of counterterrorism, and express U.S. concerns about recent violence directed at religious minorities in the Indian states of Orissa and Karnataka (Ref A, B, and C). Gupta, a seasoned bureaucrat, described India's multiple efforts in countering terrorism and candidly spoke of the challenges presented by coordinating local efforts with national and state efforts. He was receptive to our offer to have an Indian team visit the United States to examine the U.S. counterterrorism model post-9/11, but only following India's holiday season. He also agreed to receive a paper on the comprehensive measures taken by the USG post-9/11. We will quickly follow-up by providing such a document. On the matter of religious freedom and recent anti-Christian violence, Gupta appeared equally engaged and described the steps the GOI is taking to bolster law and order in Orissa and Karnataka. End Summary.

GOOD RECEPTION ON OFFER OF COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

12. (C) Ambassador opened by expressing condolences for the victims of the serial terrorist attacks that occurred in New Delhi on September 13. The terrorists are using similar methods in targeting various parts along the breadth and length of India, providing great challenges for any national government. The Ambassador candidly told Gupta that maybe now is an opportune time to deepen counterterrorism cooperation with India in light of this new terrorist challenge and the debate within India about passing a new anti-terrorism law. Like India, the United States has a federal structure and faced a similar challenge of coordinating among various levels of government administration after the 9/11 attacks. Perhaps, India could benefit

by examining some of the immense changes the U.S. Government made. The Ambassador was clear that the United States does not seek joint counterterrorism operations with India but suggested that we could provide the GOI with a paper describing the comprehensive steps the USG has taken post-9/11 to prevent future acts of terrorism and improve coordination between law enforcement agencies in the United States. Gupta replied that he would welcome such a paper and had received a similar offer and paper from the German Embassy this week. He agreed that coordination across jurisdictions is a challenge, and said the GOI has a three-tier approach focused on the national, state, and local levels. The GOI has also established a 24/7 multi-agency center but admitted that this has been plagued by staffing problems.

13. (C) The Ambassador directed Gupta's attention to the RSO and Legal Attach who described the changes the United State made to improve coordination across federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Legal Attach told Gupta that the United States learned lessons the hard way. Prior to 9/11, there was no political will or multi-agency approach to countering the terrorist threat. However, after 9/11, the US Government created a community-based model of prevention that focused on a bottom-up approach of more direct interaction with local and state law enforcement. The model ensured that local and state police officials were able to connect with other USG officials across the United States and with international partners. Gupta

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responded that the GOI is confident in its effectiveness at the federal and state level but that the local level, the constable on the patrol, remains a challenge. Over the years, the effectiveness of the local police has eroded. The GOI has pressed states to remedy this and renew the constable system. The GOI is also making efforts to involve civil society such as business organizations and civil defense. Gupta illustrated the success of cooperating with civil society by citing the lack of casualties from the terrorist attack in the Greater Kailash neighborhood on September 19. Only 15 days earlier, the people of the area had practiced a drill and therefore were able to evacuate the area around the bombing within five minutes. Gupta added that the use of local elements by terrorist outfits, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba, to execute terrorist acts is a particular challenge. Like the United Kingdom, India has to keep in mind the huge sensitivities of the local communities within which violent extremists often operate. Gupta agreed that it would be useful to see the U.S. model and what India could replicate. The Ambassador emphasized that one of the most important requirements is a recognition by all stakeholders of the scope and nature of all that needs to be changed.

14. (C) Gupta suggested that a discussion on technology as well as how one can detect whether terrorists are placing explosives could be useful. The Ambassador agreed and invited Gupta to send a team to visit the United States. The Legal Attach added that the team could also tour the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center. Gupta agreed, adding that he would be happy to send a team after two or three months when the holiday season

passed.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TAKING ACTIONS AGAINST TO STOP FURTHER
ANTI-CHRISTIAN VIOLENCE

15. (C) Moving to the matter of religious freedom, the Ambassador told Gupta that the Secretary will release the International Religious Freedom (IRF) report today. Since the report can be sensitive, he told Gupta that he wanted to highlight some specific issues. The U.S. Embassy sent a team to Orissa (Ref A) which reported the complex social and economic factors that combined with religion to trigger the violence in the state. Regarding Karnataka, the Ambassador frankly told Gupta that the USG and many groups in the U.S. are very concerned about the nature of the violence directed toward Christians. The USG is aware that some new Christian groups in Karnataka utilize aggressive proselytizing tactics; however, the actions by the police suggest that some of the violence is politically motivated. The Ambassador informed Gupta that the recent violence against Christians do not fall in the reporting period of the IRF but would very likely receive attention during the report's public release.

16. (C) Agreeing with the Embassy's analysis of the situation in Orissa, Gupta described the complex tribal and caste tensions in the state. He believed the fundamental problem is related to caste. Gupta stressed that that the GOI has sent clear directives to state and local officials not to maintain law and order and not allow disruptive actions that cause further turmoil. Turning to Karnataka, Gupta said he shared U.S. concerns and told the Ambassador that has talked daily to the Karnataka state secretary about maintaining peace. In addition,

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the GOI has issued a strong message to the state government. (Note. The media report that the GOI is preparing a formal warning to the Karnataka government under Article 355 of the Indian constitution. Article 355 states that it shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance. End Note.) Gupta stressed that this type of tension always attracts some "lumpen elements" who cause further disorder; however, he understands that people cannot be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The Ambassador reiterated U.S. concerns about the participation of the police in the violence and the importance of police neutrality. Gupta replied that this is unfortunately sometimes the case throughout the world; however, the GOI hopes the strong message it has sent to the state government proves effective. (Note. The past two days has seen very little anti-Christian violence in the state. End Note.)

17. (C) Comment. Gupta seemed receptive to our offer to pass a paper describing our post-9/11 counterterrorism model, in addition to sending a GOI team to visit the United States. We need to quickly follow-up by sending the paper. The USG has often had a difficult time engaging the Indians on counterterrorism. The opening provided by this meeting could change this

dynamic if the GOI eventually finds the U.S. model useful in improving its own national model to meet the terrorist challenge. (Note. The Legal Attach plans to send the paper to the GOI next week. End Note).

MULFORD